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EDITORIAL

THE CHICAGO CONVENTION.

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FREDERICK Engels, next to Karl Marx, the greatest Socialist philosopher, reiterates in his great work, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, the old Greek philosophy first clearly enunciated by Heraclitus, who said “Everything is and yet is not, for everything flows, is in constant motion, is in constant process of formation and dissolution.” In other words, life is not a fixed but an ever changing and growing phenomenon. In no phase of life is this philosophy so applicable in its general features as in the economic and social spheres of man. There integration and disintegration are constant and incessant.

To-day a great portion of the Working Class of this country is turning its gaze in the direction of Chicago. In the great lake city of the West there opens to-day a Convention of Workingmen, which, judging from the Manifesto calling it, is destined to mark an important change in the history of labor in this country. This convention promises to launch an economic organization of the Working Class on the lines of the conflicting interests of Capital and Labor, in direct contradistinction to the prevailing organization, that is based on the principle of the mutual interests of Capital and Labor. Such an organization necessarily demands integration and disintegration. It necessarily ignores those who regard the present form of trades unionism as fixed and stable, and proceeds to build in conformity with sound principles, philosophical as well as economic.

That such promises as those of the Chicago Manifesto have been held out before and have ended in comparative failure—that the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance and the American Labor Union, for instance, have attempted the same thing with a

* [De Leon's authorship is in doubt primarily because he was in Chicago for the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World on this date and also because it seems unlikely that he would refer to Engels' pamphlet, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, by that name rather than by the title of his own translation, *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*.—R.B.]

measure of success less than that confidently expected—is no valid reason for discrediting such promises, or not aiding in the work that would fulfill them—integration and disintegration are processes that must often be accompanied by failure and experimentation in order to be finally successful. The fact that the efforts to launch a class-conscious organization of Labor are attaining a certain cumulative force, despite their comparative failures, argues well for their final triumph.

Another fact, worthy of consideration, is the more favorable condition of affairs in which the new organization will be launched. First, it is backed by a larger number of weekly and monthly papers, free from the throttling influences of capitalist trades unionism than ever supported such a movement before. Headed by the *Daily* and *Weekly People*, and the Swedish, Jewish, German, Hungarian and Italian organs of the Socialist Labor Party, it has a press that wields a wide influence and can do much constructive as well as destructive, as much defensive as well as offensive, work in its behalf. Again, the growth of Socialist sentiment and of revolutionary Socialism are factors that cannot be ignored. They possess a power for good in combatting the fallacious and treacherous workings of capitalist unionism, that was not so conspicuously present in the past attempts of the kind promised by the Chicago Manifesto. With them present, capitalist reasoning and calumny no longer possess the field undisturbed, but are confronted by opponents whose increasing strength threatens them with overwhelming disaster. Finally, the new movement has the existing disgust against the treachery and futility of Gompersism, combined with its disintegrating tendencies, to aid it. The Working Class look from 'Frisco to Fall River. They note mutual scabbery, bribery and defeat everywhere. They note the National Civic Federation and its malignant influence in their affairs, as exemplified in the Subway strike. They are, accordingly, alive to Gompersism's impotency and treachery. Moreover, and above all, they note the organic changes in the system of Capitalism itself, and the corresponding fallacies of the Gompers' unionism. Hence they are leaving the latter and turning toward class-conscious unionism, with all that that implies. When were the promises for such unionism ever more favorable and worthy of support? Never before in the history of the American Labor Movement.

It is to be hoped that the Chicago Convention is alive to these facts, and will improve upon them. A step backward from the Manifesto would be deplorable, while conditions justify many steps forward. The mere declaration of industrial unionism will not suffice without the determination to make class-consciousness the essence of the new movement. Some sapient "Socialists" proclaim the International Typographical Union an industrial union, because it includes in its ranks many branches of the printing industry. The fact that these are the better paid branches, who use the inferior branches to raise their own salaries exclusively, as was done in the Brooklyn *Eagle* strike, doesn't affect the thinking apparatus of these wiseacres any. Nor does the International Typographical Union's endorsement of the Cragg-Jorgensen policy of settling the Labor question, have the slightest impression upon their "wisdom." They, now as always, are pleased with the form, the essence is beyond them. Save us from such "industrial unionism." It is the old poisonous adulteration with a new label! If the Chicago Convention measures up to its duty and answers Labor's prayer for relief, it will progress as it deserves. Otherwise retrogression will be its lot, while integration and disintegration will continue in the world of Labor as of yore.

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